Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology

ARKN26, Archaeology and Ancient History: Text and materiality, 15 credits

Arkeologi och antikens historia: Text och materialitet , 15 högskolepoäng

Second Cycle / Avancerad nivå

Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by The Pro Dean of First and Second Cycle Studies at The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology on 2025-12-01 (U 2025/860). The syllabus comes into effect 2026-01-15 and is valid from the autumn semester 2026.

General information

The course is included as an elective course in the Master of Arts (120 credits) programme in Archaeology and Ancient History - Theory and Practice (HAAAH). The course is also offered as a freestanding course.

The course can normally be included in a general qualification for first or second-cycle studies.

Language of instruction: English

Main field of study	Specialisation
Archaeology and Ancient History with specialization in Archaeology	A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements
Archaeology and Ancient History with specialization in Historical Archaeology	A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements
Archaeology and Ancient History with specialization in Classical Archaeology and Ancient History	A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements
Archaeology and Ancient History	A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements
Archaeology and Ancient History with specialization in Historical Osteology	A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Learning outcomes

On completion of the course, the students shall be able to

Knowledge and understanding

- explain in detail, in speech and writing, the content of different types of early texts, such as literary texts, documentary sources and different types of inscriptions
- in speech and writing, reflect on and account for the social function of the text and the dynamics between text and speech and different text types in pre-modern and early-modern society
- understand, explain and account for problems of interpretation in the intersection between object and text.

Competence and skills

- assess texts with regard to their origin and content but also to their importance and use in early periods
- understand and account for problems associated with early editions of early texts when regarding translation, modernisation of language and interpretations.

Judgement and approach

- interpret and take a considered position on the complexity of texts as sources of the past
- with a high degree of independence, analyse how the presence of texts affects the interpretation of material culture
- critically discuss theoretical perspectives on the use of text in ancient society
- critically discuss the history of text interpretation and the associated interpretative methodology.

Course content

The overall theme of the course is the source value of early texts and the relationship between text and materiality. The course addresses the social function of texts, the dynamics between text and speech, text types, practical approaches to the physical text, the methodology of close reading, the creation, management and transmission history of texts, and the object-related and spatial aspects of texts. Furthermore, the course highlights problems and challenges associated with translations and different editions of texts. Examples of source material that may be covered include ancient texts and epigraphy, runic inscriptions, Icelandic sagas, documentary sources and letters. The teaching consists of lectures and seminars. The lectures aim to provide and deepen methodological and theoretical perspectives; seminars to jointly read and interpret a series of key texts. The objective is to provide students with tools to become familiar with, interpret and take a considered position on the complexity of our sources of the past.

Course design

The teaching consists of 8-10 lectures and 8-10 seminars. All components are compulsory. Compulsory attendance entails participation in at least 80% of the teaching sessions. If total participation is between 70 and 80%, the student must complete a supplementary assignment according to the lecturer's instructions to receive a grade of Pass for the course.

If participation falls below 70%, a final grade will not be awarded for the course, and the student will be instructed to repeat the course when a place is available. However, if a student has been unable to attend a teaching session due to circumstances beyond their control, such as an accident, sudden illness or similar, they will be given the opportunity to complete one or more supplementary assignments according to the lecturer's instructions to receive a grade of Pass for the course. This also applies to students who are carrying out an assignment as an elected student representative.

Assessment

Assessment is based on an individual written assignment.

The examiner, in consultation with Disability Support Services, may deviate from the regular form of examination in order to provide a permanently disabled student with a form of examination equivalent to that of a student without a disability.

Grades

Grading scale includes the grades: Fail, Pass, Pass with distinction

Entry requirements

Admission to the course requires a level 3 (first cycle) course, including a degree project for a Bachelor's degree, in Archaeology (ARKK04, 30 credits), Classical Archaeology and Ancient History (AKSK04, 30 credits), Historical Archaeology (ARKH04, 30 credits) or Historical Osteology (HOSK04, 30 credits), or equivalent knowledge, and English 6.

Further information

- The course is offered at the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Lund University.
- The course replaces ARKN21.
- The number of credits allocated for course content that is shared in whole or in part with another course can only be credited once for a degree. For further details, see the current registration information and other relevant documentation.
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